





I NDAFFA # BRUNHILDA, the forging midwife

Christina Katharina Lökenhoff

www.katharina-loekenhoff.de @katharina.loekenhoff mobil 0049 173 5345179









I NDAFFA # BRUNHILDA, the forging midwife

MEMBRANES and INTERVIEWS

Katharina Lökenhoff

According to the topic I NDAFFA #, I love the idea to fuel the "needed birthing of a new world" with my MEMBRANES and my Crossing-Research-INTERVIEWS. As an artist from Germany, I find my sources of creation in Africa. In my working periods in Abidjan, Cairo and Cape Town I realised a new dialogue with the material and a fundamental connection between body, colour and the power of life. I was encouraged by the strong African women to trust my vital forces that had been buried by European education.

In my INTERVIEWS in Dakar I am looking for an exchange regarding the African origin of the "Mother-Archetype". I am curious about the recent role models of a new humanity, overcoming destructive patriarchal patterns.

This research is a part of my "CROSSING" project, which is dedicated to finding sustainable life strategies by crossing borders. Exploring how people in other places react to the experience of uncertainty caused by a pandemic, which brings the consequences of colonisation and globalisation to light, is about finding new ways of connecting through art.

In the dialogues with other artists, the central theme is the experience of boundaries as a fundamental condition of human structure. In most of the interviews the connection between threshold experience and fear became clear. This led to the question why fear exists and what it serves.

On the trips to Iceland, Finland, Egypt, Lebanon and South Africa, cultural exchange has been successful as a means of overcoming borders.

My MEMBRANE "Brunhilda", as a forging midwife, even so as the "Poppy Woman", is a patroness of this transformation process OUT OF THE FIRE.

They challenge us to get rid of fear and reconnect us with our sources.

The central material of my work is silk dipped in beeswax. Its haptic and visual appearance mirrors the theme of thresholds in the phenomenon of the skin as a membrane. The energy of colour is related to one's own body using archaic original forms: Thus, the MEMBRANES are kind of magical instruments to empower people for a common and shared future based on clarified conditions.

transformations 12. Mixed media on waxskin. 29,6 cm x 21,5 cm. 2013/2014 Transformation 07. Mixed media on waxskin. 29,6 cm x 23,5 cm. 2014 Kosmologie Chartre. Mixed media on waxskin. 29,6 cm x 21,6 cm. 2017 transformations 05. Mixed media on waxskin. 29,6 cm x 21,6 cm. 2013/2014



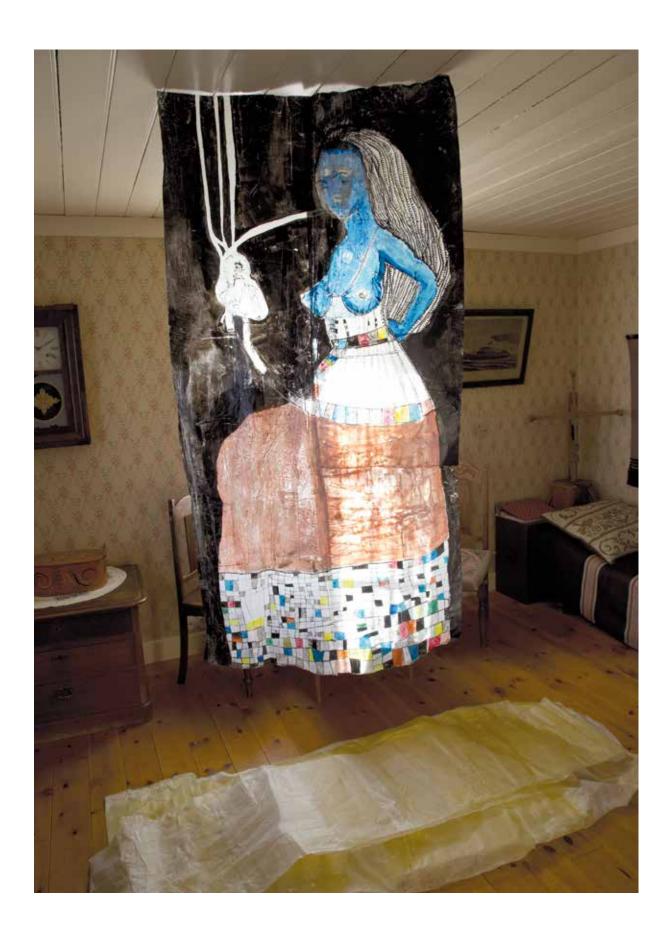


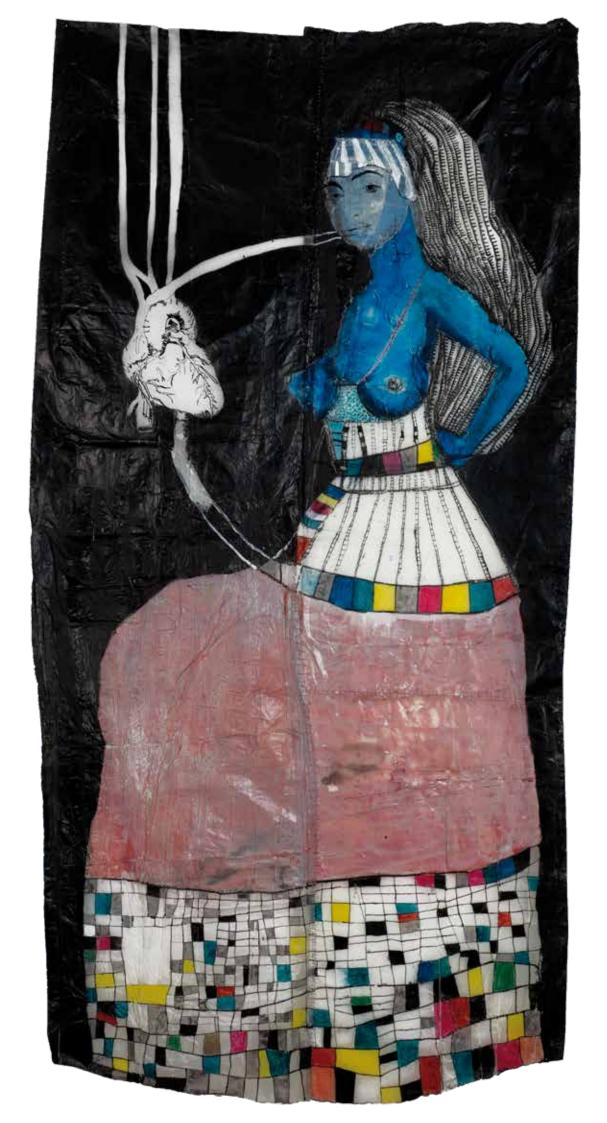






Brunhilda, the forging midwife from Skagaströnd, Island



















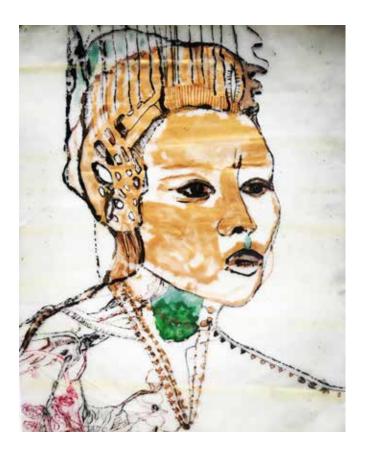
Bagala. Mixed media on waxskin. 65×44 cm, 2020



Matangi. Mixed media on waxskin. 63×32 cm, 2020

Katharina Lökenhoff is an artist based in Essen, Germany. Born in May 1969 into an arts collectors' family, she studied Arts, Philosophy and Pedagogy. Her own teachings and even her former family life as being a mother of two now grown up young women have always been part of her artistic activities, as a kind of parallel process. While working on her PhD thesis on "Colour sense in relation to Goethe's und Beuys' symbol concept" at Witten University, she also curated some exhibitions at "Kunsthaus Essen." From August 2018 she was on a journey for her artistic research project "Crossing", travelling to Iceland, Finland, Egypt, Lebanon and South Africa. It is her intention to have an international exchange in interviews with other artists about the issue of overcoming borders as a necessity to enable a sustainable future. In line with this topic, she is working on Membranes made of wax skin as transformation tools with a material, which mirrors the theme of crossing thresholds in the phenomenon of the skin as an intermediary between the inner and outer world. In her work, she is very much involved in conveying different levels of being, consciousness and cultures.

KingQueen, Mixed media on waxskin. 29,6 x 21,5 cm. 2014
Pieta, Mixed media on waxskin. 38 x 29 cm. 2020
Human, Mixed media on waxskin. 34 x 25 cm. 2020
Butterfly Women 03, Mixed media on waxskin. 29,6 x 21,5 cm. 2013













"I believe without art we would not be living today"

Interview with Amina Kadous, Installation artist (Cairo) in Cairo

What comes to mind when you hear the expression "Crossing the Threshold"?

For me "Crossing the Threshold" personally has historical and cultural connotations. Taking a step into history, into the past. Stepping into a time machine. Like the room we are in now. I have always imagined to take a step into the past and never return. The past has always been my safe haven. Crossing the threshold also can mean when two histories connect and civilisations override each other. Therefore, this phrase also taps on many political and social issues. Exchange of cultures and social changes have eased with the expansion of the technological era we are experiencing now. With globalisation, crossing the threshold encompasses all that is related to the virtual realm. Like crossing bridges, crossing boundaries, not physically but also intellectually and virtually. Egypt was at a certain point in time a threshold for the west. It was a step into the Arab world for the westerners. It has been ruled by numerous rulers taking over and trying to impose their own vision and recreate their dreams in a country which was not theirs. Therefore it has become a hybrid as well a vessel that is absorbing, and till now it has been absorbing.

Do you share the opinion that people today are insecure due to the strong cultural and environmental or social changes in the world?

I definitely agree with this because I think the opposite happens, the more you are exposed, the more open you're supposed to be. Unfortunately, a lot of people have become so intimidated by just the amount of information that we are reading today in social media, on the internet, like the news we are reading whether it's bad or good news. A lot of people have been so insecure about being exposed to such situations because for them there is also this huge stereotype that's always put upon you if you belong to a certain group or if you act upon a certain issue, if you dress in a certain way, if you speak a







certain language. I have to say we have come a long way and the world now is becoming more accepting towards the differences and the social changes; yet there is still so much to be done and so much insecurity we carry within ourselves the longer we live and the more the world becomes exposed to change.

And do you draw an inner correlation between fear and not feeling connected to the world?

I believe it is very hard not to be connected to the world we are living in. We are connected whether we like it or not and we are affected physically and mentally whether we like it or not. We breathe, we eat from the earth and we live of the soils of our world. I also think it is by human instinct that we search for connections. I think if there is a certain fear I feel towards the world, then it is the fear of not giving back and the fear of not being able to sustain ourselves, that one day the cycle of life might stop and I have not contributed my share to it. [continued in the catalogue "CROSSING"]

"It is my way of saying 'yes' to life."

Interview with Deborah Felmeth, Singer and Weaver (Damascus) in Cape Town

What comes to mind when hearing the expression "Crossing the Threshold"?

The first thing that comes to mind is that I have a choice about whether I am entering in or leaving, and that I am doing both at the same time. So crossing a threshold always has the sense of being in a place where the relationship changes, but it could change in any constellation, it's not better or worse, it is not past or future. It's simply a change in constellation, as if a geometry. Crossing the threshold also seems to mean that there is an achievement that is possible, in other words, I have reached something and now I am crossing the threshold where it will bear fruit. So that is a different shade of meaning, and as it comes into my mind it has a feeling to me of excitement: It's like "hu" (Gesture of exhaling) – this threshold, it may be joy! It's got life in it.

What do you think of the phenomenon of fear?

Fear [Laughing] I think fear is perhaps a habit that is developed, and maybe it has different roots. But I think it comes from not allowing the breath to enter the body, not allowing the ground to be the gravity which supports you, not allowing the possibilities to unfold whatever they might be. So it has a constriction. Fear is a 'drawing back from'. That is why it has to be with the breath for me ... [Strong inhaling] "I do not know what's going to happen"! And it limits the possibilities. Fear means that "I cannot do that, I can't do that" ... so it becomes very still ... even though it sometimes might look like "grrrr" [Sounds like a wild animal] and it might go running down the street. A fear is ultimately a lost connection with God. If I am really breathing my connection to spirit, always, the divine source is here.

Does fear have a purpose? Or to put the question in another context: Abdullah Ibrahim mentioned that fear is coming from the devil. But what is coming from the devil is also coming from God. So there is maybe some-

thing to learn from it. For me, living in paradise is living without fear and living outside paradise has a purpose for mankind...

We are born out of paradise and we have a task then in front of us, to become aware. Satan is often said to be coming in any time ego moves you, then Satan has a little hook and he's really got you. So it's not 'l' when searching to return to paradise, it is the divine in me, through me. But if I think I am doing it, and it is my work, it's mine, then fear has all the chance in the world. It's like rubbing his hands, oh yeah, we can really take the ground out from under you without much trouble. It's easy to pull the rug out from under you when you think it's all your doing. Fear is not being connected to the divine source.

Is there any experience in your life which opens you to your very own artistic process?

Breath first ... nature ... completely ... I am a woman of the water, the lake, the river, fresh water. I am a little bit afraid of the ocean. But all other water -I find my consciousness is very nurtured, nourished and encouraged to express itself when I am near water. So I want just to be in the water, on the water, near the water. But breath first. I am really in love with breath, with breathing, with tasting this life-force that comes into our body, and it is shared with every single living creature! So my inspirations are also in the idea of harmony. As a person who loves to play music and to sing and to move I find they're all related to each other in terms of harmony, and they can be very obvious or they can be more distinct. But they're always in a harmonic relationship, so the vibration of the world is of interest to me. I was a weaver for a long time. And I always felt when I was weaving, and even when I was spinning wool, that I was participating in creation. I was not doing it, I was participating in it. Everything was doing it! Ah, now I'm doing it, too, we're all doing it, the world is doing it! Weaving cloth then became musical to me, because the relationship of the colours was like the relationship of the notes. So it feels like visible music instead of audible music. And I would find myself composing on the loom. (...) Is there any precondition or preparation for getting into your artistic process, rituals or something like this?

Setting the intention, setting the clear intention. In Sanskrit it's called sankalpa. And I noticed with sankalpa that it should be clear, it should be simple. Our intention cannot have three paragraphs. ... Rather, a very simple statement. My intention is to trust.

Do you know the feeling of something like a rift within ourselves, or us and the world, and does your art offer a special way to deal with this feeling ...?

Yes there is a rift. And we are disconnected. And I think that all art in general is the approach toward being in synchrony with that paradise, with all that is. But I would not say that my art is specifically in an attempt to do that. It is my way of saying "yes" to life. "Yes, Yes, Yes." When it is difficult "yes". When it is beautiful "yes".

And what do you think about the connection of the inner human structure and the so-called virtual reality? When you first said "inner human structure" I thought the question is going to have more to do with anatomy and physiology, which I am passionate about. So I am very interested and explore a lot in myself, and also in classes with students, everything from embryology to this present moment and who is the micro-biome. Who is this living in you? Because there is more information about the micro-biome than there is actually from my own DNA! We are in this together. I am very much in worship of the chance to be in the body. The virtual reality I have had this much experience with it (gesture for small). And while I have found it fascinating I do not find it attractive at all. In other words, I have not tried to get more than this much because I am a sort of like: "This" [shows around ...] is such a world! Why would I try to approximate [laughing] So I maybe don't know enough about the virtual reality of the games and such things. But I am wary of it, I'm not eager. No. Can art help to create methods and strategies for a healthy and sustainable life?

Insh'Allāh. Yes. God willing. A sustainable life, yes! I think, I believe, I want, to live in a world in which artists are not the occasional, unusual, but they are the norm. I think it is a shared life. That is not to say that there is no competition in art. There is. And that's unfortunate to me, because I want to take us away







from that kind of judgement. But I certainly think it can help. And I think it is possible. How can we strengthen the human quality of being connected through art? By providing more opportunities to each other, inviting each other into that way of looking, moving, seeing, sounding, sharing. It is an open invitation. Everybody's got something to give to the party.

"I jumped over the fence ... me and art we somehow met each other" Interview with Wonder, Painter (Cape Town) in Cape Town

What comes to mind when you hear the expression "Crossing the Threshold"?

It's like an obstacle where it seems like I should get on the other side of.

Do you have some experiences of thresholds in your life?

Puh. I think the whole life is about obstacles that one has to get over. My work relates to these kinds of obstacles, you know, I set out for something and something gets into the way. I rely on mistakes to move it a little bit or experiences to get on the other side of something. (...) I can't think of a serious threshold that I had to cross.

And what do you think about the phenomenon of fear? Where does it come from? What is it good for?

When am I afraid? I think fear is always invested in insecurities. It comes from inside ... pooh ... I haven't been physically and not emotionally afraid in a long time actually. I haven't been in a position where I had to deal with being afraid of something or not. Yes, I live in this crazy place called South Africa, fear is a big investment in our societies, fear of coming out by the door, car might drive me over, might get robbed. These kinds of fear, yes, I don't give them a consequence. But, yeah, fear is a phenomenon that's in our lives. I don't pay much attention to them. But it is an issue for society to have power over people Oh yeah. (...) I am always taking myself a little bit apart from society. I am not really communal. Yes, I am friendly and I can be with people, but I don't live in a community which represents me, or I think they don't. Yes, and my background is also very complicated. I am a coloured person, and this in a sense is a society in itself, not something that I would say I am. But if I want to be understood and if I want to say "yes, this is where I am from" I have to use the term in order to make someone understand at least where I am from or what language I speak or what social or political circumstance I was put in. (...) I am afraid of this consequence of identity, that I have an identity which I can either say sophistically "This is who I am". I always think I am a person before I am in my skin. (...)

Was there any experience in your life, which opens you up to being an artist?

Probability, possibility, that means that I can wake up in the morning is my possibility. I always think that is my biggest power. The fact that I am alive. The fact that I am possible. That I have another chance in the morning to get up and do what I do. This is the chance I have.

But was there any special day, any special moment, where you had the idea or you suddenly were sure "I am an artist." [Laughs]

I was hungry at some point. But hungry in another sense. I was hungry for food. I was jobless and I stayed in the mountains. I had to eat. This was the road into my art practice. I ended up in a church which gives people soup and it was a soup kitchen alongside an art practitioner and this was my first experience with making art. But I didn't go there to make art. I went there because I was hungry and people were fighting in the queue, they were high on glue or something and I thought "Oh no, I am not gonna stand in this queue". So instead of going in that direction I went to draw and this was my first ever experience of having to draw something and there was a woman involved, Sarah Campbell, who is a known artist, who asked me "Do you want to draw? Or do you want to stay with them and fight over the food?" and I said "I would rather be here until they are gone." And this was my first experience with actually "pick up a pencil and put something to image on a piece of paper". But hunger was the first motivation. It was not in my concept that I wanted to be an artist one day. And in my family I don't have anybody that went in this direction, that was an artist or musician or free thinker, I think I am the first in my family. But the church had a fundraiser who invited likeminded people and, yes, a gallerist walked through the door and saw my little drawings and thought that I had something to go for. She said it in this way: "You should be an artist. You should try and practice a little bit more". Yeah, and introduced me to the "Outreach Funding" which I share today. The same fund seventeen years ago which helped me have my first exhibition.

And now is there any special precondition or preparation you have to do or are doing before you start painting?

Walking. I walk. And I deal with images which are actual, they exist. A chair, a tree. These are the things that are valuable in my work. I like to see things that I paint, they have to exist ... So I walk a little bit. Just to motivate my mind a little bit. Then I work for three hours, very concentrated. Then I can sleep and do the same process again. Go for a walk. Refresh again my soul.

And do you have the feeling of something like a gap or a rift between you and the world? Do you know this feeling?

No. No.

So your normal state is to be connected. Because you had this feeling of living in the mountains. You had a possibility to overcome this wound?

I would not say that I was wounded. What took me to the forest was that I was searching very much for myself. I lived in the township with my brother who was practicing panel spraying, spray painting and this is a profession which I quite know. But it was his thing and he set up a little space at home which he was working from. I was 29 years old and I started asking myself "So what is yours?" And yes, I had no complete idea. I left one morning at 4 o'clock. I wrote him a letter: "Listen," [Laughs] It's bizarre ... "Listen, I don't know what I am doing, but the moment I know I will let you know." This is how I left. I jumped over the fence ... it was very early ... very early. That was a threshold, this fence. I jumped over the fence. Not to wake him. Not to disappoint him. I left him this letter. I took the first train to town and I ended up on the street, of course, because I had no plan. There was no structural plan as to what I wanted. I just knew I had to get out of the township. I was drunk by II o'clock. There were drugs all around. And yes, I just got consumed by this and left very early and I really had no idea in the top, on the street for two weeks and then I realised I had to sleep and I could not trust anybody to sleep just there in the street. That's when







I walked to the mountains. There was no romantic thinking of "I want to be close to nature". No ... It was an escape. I wanted to be safe and not part of what was going on on the street. Yes, walked over Signal Hill and ended up at the top of Lion's Head. Yes, the next morning I was there. I am good, I am safe. Nothing has happened, I think. I stayed there for a little while. Five years. And then I piloted everything out of this particular place. The mountain became true, yeah, it became a sacred place, so to speak. It was the first time that I ever said to myself "Listen, you have to get up, you have to find a job, you have to become responsible for yourself." It was my first experience with responsibility that I had. To put responsibility on me. That I have to be responsible for the things that I am going to need, like eating, candles, whatever I was doing in the forest. And then it became quite homely. [continued in the catalogue "CROSSING"]







"There is this saying that if something makes you afraid, it means you have to do it." Interview with Lizette Chirrime, Painter, Fabric Collagist from Mozambique (Cape Town) in Cape Town

What comes to mind when you hear the expression "Crossing the Threshold"?

Okay, there are two answers to this question. I cross two worlds. The first world is the one that we live in so when I have to cross the border, first of all what comes to mind is a bit of fear, because I don't know what I am going to find there, but at the same time I feel overwhelmed or like happy, because I know I will find or see something I have never seen before. It's something new, so normally we are afraid of new things and we are afraid of the unknown, you know, so that makes me happy. Then the other crossing place is in my dreams, I dream a lot, I feel a lot and I feel a lot of energy and there are things I feel, there are things I dream that will happen and I cannot explain it and then I feel, 'Why am I dreaming like that?' And there are places I see, I come across and that come to my mind, like I have been there so that makes me question myself like 'Where is this place?' You know, it's always a question in my mind that I am not sure about, but at the same time I feel I am sure about it. [Both laugh]

Could you explain this? That you are sure and not sure at the same moment?

Yeah, like – It is like that, this invisible world – it's like – it's a feeling that you are sure and you are not sure. It's like a question, a question mark like death. Some people say there is a life after death, but never, no one ever has come back from death. But I experienced it not long ago, when my mom died last year on my birthday, but then she is gone but then she comes back. When she died on my birthday, for me it felt like she went, but she stayed. She is not here, I can't see her, but I can feel her, do you understand? It's a strange world, so she comes into my dreams, she tells me things, she protects me.

[continued in the catalogue "CROSSING"]







"I'm trying to create that change ... I have seen the sparkle in their eyes." Interview with Ziyanda ZeeMaster Majozi, Painter (Cape Town) in Cape Town

What comes to mind when you hear the expression "Crossing the Threshold"?

Okay, to me it's like crossing boundaries. I guess in a way that's how I understand it, like, there is a separation of things and it's bringing those things together or crossing from one side to the other.

Is your art connected to the phenomenon of borders or does anything specific happen in your life according to this?

In a way I kind of experienced that when I had to travel to Amsterdam and that's the only time it kind of occurred to me that there is a difference, like between the two worlds that I come from and the world that I was in. And that's why I created some work that kind of questions how this whole thing happened like colonisation happened. Yeah, it kind of occurred to me, like at that point, so I created some works on that question, that aspect.

And this phenomenon of crossing the threshold can also be something which is not related to borders of countries, but can also be something within yourself. So it's something like these boundaries you have in your own education or in your own thinking?

There is this indeed, 'cause now that you mention it, for a long time now I kind of have been feeling that I am not free enough to express or to – how can I put it? Because education, as you mentioned it, – it's a kind of a big deal that an artist has like an accreditation. Like you have to have – like – some kind of a degree in art or something, in order for people to take you seriously and all that. So for me now that is actually one of the things I am struggling with, because I have not really – yes I have studied art here and there – but because I did not go to university or the art schools that are taken seriously, so it's kind of a problem in a way.

[continued in the catalogue "CROSSING"]

"What the glacier has to say to me, to us?"

Interview with Laurence Bonvin, Photographer (Swiss) in Berlin

What comes to mind when you hear the expression "Crossing the Threshold"?

Crossing the threshold – it's like going for what I want, daring maybe also. Daring to go into a space or a place. I mean not only a physical one. It often is more something that goes on in the head. For me a threshold is like a mental limit, about where I can go, what I can say, and crossing it is a sort of daring. Yes, daring of the new or the different.

Do you have concrete experiences with thresholds?

Ah, I have to think what is a concrete experience. One example I can give is related to work. I studied photography and was a photographer for a very long time, but I always had somehow this desire, sometimes conscious, sometimes less, to make films. It was somehow always in the back of my mind. And at some point I said, okay, now I try to get into a film school. I was not very strategic, because I only applied for one. I did not get through and I realised I was stuck in my practice. My father had died, I was depressed and, in a way, wanting to make film might have been an escape. After that it still took me some time and eventually after some months, I came up with a completely new work. It was still photography, but I had switched from black and white to colour and to staging people in interiors in very pictorial portraits. And I think that is a good example of what going over the threshold is for me. I can think of different moments like that, when things actually happen later than expected and then in a completely natural way, not having to even think about it.

The way is free?

The way is free, but I don't always see it immediately. That's one reason why being patient is so important, For it to happen, I have to somehow prepare the ground. And also I would not say that this is always the case, but it also has to do with some kind of failure. As if failure confronts you with a border, a limitation, something that forces you to find new solutions.







And what could be a good preparation for crossing borders?

[Laughs] Well, maybe I immediately think about physical experience because I was a rock climber, not at a very high level at all, but in climbing, there's a very strong element of getting over (...) limitations. And then I also think about photographing, because I photographed a lot in peripheries, often then climb over fences or find ways to go into places where I was not supposed to go to make pictures. I think in a way it's all about determination. You want to go somewhere and, whether there is a wall or not, does not matter. And then it is about daring without listening to fears. As if the desire is stronger than the fear, because if I start thinking, there could be a dog or a security guard on the other side, or about being arrested for trespassing, well, I end up not doing it. But if the desire is stronger, then somehow I'll find a way. Anticipation and good planning are also part of a successful crossing.

[continued in the catalogue "CROSSING"]



"CROSSING-INTERVIEWS" ICELAND, FINLAND, EGYPT, LIBANON, SOUTH AFRICA

Hadar Mitz, Photographer, Israel

Cecilia Josefson, Composer, Denmark

Catherine Taylor, Writer, New York

Ben Davis, Photographer, New York

Laura Feliu, Photographer, Spain

Noah Jordan, Composer, Canada

Maryse Andraos, Writer, Canada

Stefan Blon, Psychologist and Illustrator, South Africa

Pompi Caputo, Photographer, Argentina

Jason Lee Starrin, Sculptor, USA

Galadriel Gonzalez Romero, Sculptor, South Africa

June Cheong, Filmmaker, Singapore

Michele Sierra, Sculptor, Australia

Adam Paquette, Painter, Australia, Germany

Kendall Sshauder, Fibers, art & tech, performance, USA

Daniel Pasteiner, Painter, UK

Amaro Abreu, Street Art, Brazil

Amina Ayman Kadous, Installation, Egypt

Shéhérazade Lhadj Mohand, painter, Bergium

Goran Hassanpour, Installation, Sweden

Alexander Furcolin Filho, photpgrapher, Brazil

Manohar Chiluveru, concept art, India

Linda Tedsdotter, curator and sculpto, Sweden

Alberto Pereira, Installation, Brazil

Laurence Bonvin, Swiss



